

"Method and system of payment by electronic cheque."

The present invention relates to a method of payment by electronic cheque, in particular in the case
5 of a direct transaction between solely, on the one hand, a payment issuer furnished with a medium comprising at least one blank electronic cheque certified by a financial institution and an overall amount useable at least partially in respect of the
10 electronic cheque, and, on the other hand, a recipient of the payment furnished with a device adapted to receive at least one aforesaid electronic cheque of the abovementioned medium.

Numerous problems arise in the securing of such
15 payment systems, in particular when these payments are desired to be made in a so-called "off-line" manner, that is to say with no link with the main computer of a financial institution such as a bank or a company for managing payments by electronic memory card and means
20 of electronic dialogue.

One practice which is currently spreading is the storage, in an electronic payment card, of blank cheques. In this case, there is an imperative need to be certain that each electronic cheque can serve once
25 only, is certified as authentic by a financial institution, or better still an empowered authority, and will be reimbursed to the recipient of the payment by the financial institution of his choice.

For this purpose, use is made of procedures for
30 transporting, exchanging and verifying signatures between what has been referred to hereinabove as a medium and a device. In such procedures, it is deemed that too many security elements to be kept secret may be violated by third parties seeking to use for example
35 one and the same cheque several times, whether this be at the level of the aforesaid issuer of the cheque or of the recipient thereof, whether the issuer and the recipient are or are not conniving, whether one is attempting to steal from the other or one of the

financial institutions, the one issuing the electronic cheque or the one which pays it to the recipient.

The purpose of the present invention is to solve these problems and to carry out such payments
5 with a monitoring of the latter which is least prone to fraud in an "off-line" service, by organizing an interoperability between the said medium and device.

The term interoperability should be understood to mean the possibility of secure cooperation of
10 payment between a medium for example emanating from a Belgian institution and a device emanating from a foreign institution and located abroad, or else emanating from another Belgian institution and located in Belgium, and whose secure cooperation is possible
15 without the sharing of one or more secret keys between the two institutions and hence between the medium and the device.

It goes without saying that the solution brought to these problems may also find a definite
20 application in, for example, the exchanging of digital data recorded on a medium, so as to be certain that they are authenticated by whom it may concern, and not acquired fraudulently, so as to be supplied to a recipient who acquires them in good faith or not to be
25 supplied to a recipient having no entitlement thereto.

To solve these problems, the method of the invention comprises, so that the device can recognize the authenticity of the medium and of a cheque being received,

30 - a calculation by the medium of a table, possibly partial, on the basis of at least one set of k base values, by applying successively to each of them n times an irreversible function with parameter(s) differing preferably with each application and giving k
35 intermediate values n times,

- a calculation by the medium of a secret key on the basis of the last k intermediate values of order n and, on the basis of this key, a calculation of a distinctive sign of the cheque,

- a transmission by the medium to the device of the distinctive sign calculated for the electronic cheque,

5 - a financial commitment of the medium in relation to the device, as regards the cheque, by supplying to the device,

- a first result of an irreversible function via which was processed the result of a first algorithm combining a secret verification key, originating from the
10 financial institution issuing the electronic cheque, and dynamic parameters of this cheque, and

- a second result of a second algorithm combining the secret key calculated for the medium, the dynamic parameters of this cheque and the first result
15 hereinabove,

- at least one random/pseudo-random guesstimation, by the device (3), of k numbers m of successive applications of the irreversible function to the k base values, the k numbers m lying between zero and n and
20 possibly being different from one another, the sum of the k numbers m having to be a determined constant,

- a transmission of the result of the guesstimation by the device to the medium,

- a response by the medium to the said
25 guesstimation by the device, comprising on the one hand the result of the first algorithm combining the secret verification key and the dynamic parameters of the cheque and, on the other hand, a set of the k intermediate values obtained during the successive
30 applications of the irreversible function to each of the k base values the number or numbers of times m lying between zero and n ,

- by the device:

- successive applications of the irreversible function
35 to each of the k intermediate values of order(s) m until the last k intermediate values of order n are obtained,

- a calculation of the said secret key on the basis of these last k intermediate values of order n and, on the

basis of this secret key, a calculation of the distinctive sign of the cheque,

- a comparison of the distinctive sign thus calculated and of the distinctive sign calculated by the medium
5 and received from the latter,

- a verification by calculation and comparison in the device of the said second result of the second algorithm and of that received from the medium,

- a verification by calculation and comparison in the
10 device of the said first result of an irreversible function and of that received from the medium and,

- if the said comparison and verifications each give equality, an acceptance and a storage by the device of the electronic cheque issued by the medium.

15 Thus the use is avoided, for example, of special-purpose cards (or media) furnished with cryptography integrated circuits using public key algorithms, for example RSA, known in the art, developed by RSA Data Security Inc. Redwood City,
20 California, USA or of cards operating with globalization of DES keys (Data Encryption Standard), or some other secret key encryption algorithm also known in the art.

Advantageously, the sum of the k numbers m is a
25 constant equal to $n*k/2$ if the product $n*k$ is even or, if this product is odd, to $(n*k-1)/2$.

According to one embodiment of the invention, the method comprises:

- a storage in the medium of at least one electronic
30 cheque template useable to make at least one aforesaid cheque,

- a transmission by the medium to the device of:

- a series of h distinctive signs of a cheque, each associated with a distinct set of k base values
35 contained in the medium,

- an index, lying between 1 and h , for designating a particular distinctive sign from among the h aforementioned distinctive signs,

- a digital signature produced by the issuing financial institution so as to guarantee the said distinctive signs, and

5 - a use by the device, for the said comparison, of the particular distinctive sign determined by the index in the guise of distinctive sign received from the medium, and

- a verification by the device of the said digital signature by means of a public key known to the device.

10 According to one mode of realization, the method of the invention comprises, in respect of the transaction, a transmission by the medium to the device of non-secret data which may be the identification of the financial institution which certifies the
15 electronic cheque and, as appropriate, the public key of the issuing financial institution and a certificate of the abovementioned public key issued by a certificate authority. The device can verify in this case the authenticity of the said certificate by means
20 of another public key, known to the device, of the certificate authority.

According to one particular embodiment of the invention, the medium can be reloaded at least as regards its overall amount and/or its number of
25 electronic cheques in the course of a link with the abovementioned financial institution or one of its delegates.

According to one embodiment of the invention, the method comprises, for the calculation of the table
30 by the medium, a mother base value common to each column of the table, and an application to this mother base value of at least one irreversible function preferably with different parameter(s) for each column so as to obtain the said k base values.

35 According to an advantageous embodiment of the invention, in the course of a reloading of the medium, it is furthermore supplied with an identification of cheque templates, updated abovementioned static parameters, a series of h distinctive signs, an

abovementioned digital signature and a determined number of base values or, as appropriate, of at least one aforesaid common base value.

According to another advantageous embodiment of the invention, the device records, during a transaction, the result of the first algorithm and/or, as appropriate, an identification of the aforesaid financial institution and/or an identification of the template of the electronic cheque received and/or the identification of the medium.

According to a particularly advantageous embodiment of the invention, the process makes provision for the fact

- that in respect of incremental payments of the kind by telephone card, the dynamic parameters of the cheques moreover comprise:

- the amount or the sequence of amounts corresponding to the authorized incremental payments,
- a base chaining value,
- a chaining of successive chaining values which each stem successively from the application of an irreversible function to the immediately following chaining value, and

- that after having performed with the hereinabove device a protocol for payment by electronic cheque, the medium can perform an incremental payment by supplying the receiving device with successive chaining values, the device preserving a record of the last chaining value received and of the corresponding index.

According to another particularly advantageous embodiment of the invention, the method comprises a cancellation of a transaction of payment by cheque from the medium to the device. For this purpose, the method can comprise, on the one hand, a storage, in the device, of at least one electronic cheque template, issued by the financial institution of the device, and of secret data relating to this template and, on the other hand, a programming of the medium in such a way that the latter cannot receive a payment by cheque

other than from the device to which a transaction was previously paid by means of the said medium, the latter storing the cancellation payment cheque until the medium is presented to its corresponding financial institution, in particular for a reloading of the medium.

Preferably, the method of the invention furthermore comprises steps of inverse authentication via which the medium can for its part recognize the authenticity of the device. For this purpose, the steps of inverse authentication can be of the same kind as those for the authentication of the medium, whilst requiring, as appropriate, only a single distinctive sign of electronic cheque template.

According to another preference, the method of the invention can comprise, for at least some of the inverse authentication steps, the use of an element for communication between the medium and the device, this communication element preferably being held by the payment issuer which holds the said medium.

In order to increase the number of times that the same cheque template can serve to make a distinct cheque, the method comprises, in the medium, a combination of each of the various distinctive signs, at a first level, by means of irreversible functions each time with another value or another distinctive sign; the results of each pair of applications of the irreversible function are thereafter combined at a second level via another application of the irreversible function so as to give new results to be combined at a third level via one or other applications of the irreversible function and so on and so forth until a single result is obtained, and which is signed, as deduced distinctive sign, for the digital signature so as to sign the cheques issued.

Then, for a verification by the device of the deduced distinctive sign, the method can comprise a transmission from the medium each time of the second distinctive sign used in a first combination at the

first level and, at each succeeding level, of the intermediate result of the irreversible functions, which is used so as to be combined successively with the corresponding intermediate result obtained on the basis of the second distinctive sign, until the deduced distinctive sign is obtained.

The invention also relates to a payment system for implementing the method hereinabove. For this purpose, the system of the invention comprises

- 10 - at least one medium furnished
- with means for storing at least
- a blank electronic cheque certified by a financial institution,
- an overall amount useable at least partially in
- 15 respect of the electronic cheque,
- at least one distinctive sign for this cheque, which may be included in the latter,
- at least one set of k base values which may be derived from a single common mother value,
- 20 - a secret verification key originating from the financial institution issuing the electronic cheque, and
- dynamic parameters of the said cheque, and
- with means of calculation
- 25 - of a table on the basis of the k base values, by applying successively to each of them n times an irreversible function with parameter(s) differing preferably with each application and giving k intermediate values n times,
- 30 - of a secret key on the basis of the last k intermediate values of order n and, on the basis of this key, of a distinctive sign of the cheque,
- of a first result of an irreversible function via which was processed the result of a first algorithm
- 35 combining the secret verification key and dynamic parameters of the cheque, and
- of a second result of a second algorithm combining the secret key calculated for the medium and the

dynamic parameters of this cheque and of the
aforementioned first result, and

- with means of direct dialogue with at least one
device adapted to receive at least one aforesaid
5 electronic cheque from the abovementioned medium and
among other things the distinctive sign of the said
cheque,

- the device being equipped

- with means of random/pseudo-random guesstimation
10 of k numbers m of successive applications of the
irreversible function to the k base values, the k
numbers m lying between zero and n and possibly being
different from one another, the sum of the k numbers m
having to be a determined constant,

15 - with means of direct dialogue corresponding to
those of the medium, so as among other things to carry
out a transmission of the result of the guesstimation
to the medium,

- with means of calculation

20 - successively applying the irreversible function to
each of the k intermediate values of order m until the
last k intermediate values of order n are obtained,

- of the said secret key on the basis of these last k
intermediate values of order n and, on the basis of
25 this key, a calculation of the distinctive sign of the
cheque,

- means of comparison of the distinctive sign thus
calculated and of the distinctive sign calculated by
the medium and received from the latter,

30 - means of verification by calculation and
comparison of the said second result of the second
algorithm and of that received from the medium,

- means of verification by calculation and
comparison of the said first result of an irreversible
35 function and of that received from the medium and,

- means of storage of at least the electronic
cheque issued by the medium, if the said comparison and
verifications each give equality.

According to one embodiment of the system of the invention,

- the means of storage of the medium are devised so as to store at least one electronic cheque template useable to make at least one aforesaid cheque,
- the means of dialogue of the medium are devised so as to transmit to the device: a series of h distinctive signs of a cheque, each associated with a distinct set of k base values contained in the medium, an index, lying between 1 and h , for designating a particular distinctive sign from among the h aforementioned distinctive signs, and a digital signature produced by the issuing financial institution so as to guarantee the said distinctive signs, and
- the device is devised so as to use, for the said comparison, the particular distinctive sign determined by the index in the guise of distinctive sign received from the medium, and
- the device comprises means of calculation devised so as to verify the said digital signature by means of a public key known to the device.

According to another embodiment of the system of the invention, the means of dialogue of the medium are devised so as to transmit to the device non-secret data which may be the identification of the financial institution which certifies the electronic cheque and, as appropriate, the public key of the issuing financial institution and a certificate of this public key issued by a certificate authority. Therefore, the device can be devised so as to verify the authenticity of the said certificate by means of another public key, known to the device, of the certificate authority.

Advantageously, the system according to the invention comprises as medium a payment card of the integrated circuit type and as device a payment terminal with reading and writing for a card of this type.

As a variant, the system according to the invention comprises as medium a payment card of the

integrated circuit type and as device a payment terminal with reading and writing for a card of this type and furnished with means of transferring data received from the said card, and/or processed by the
5 terminal, into storage means detachable from the terminal proper and in particular transportable to a financial institution so as to perform therein a transfer of the said data.

According to another variant of the system
10 according to the invention, in particular in the case where the device is remote from the issuer of the payment and/or in the case of steps of inverse authentication of the device by the medium, the abovementioned medium is composed among other things,
15 on the one hand, of the aforesaid integrated circuit card and, on the other hand, of a communication element, for dialogue between the card and the said device.

Other details and particular features of the
20 invention will emerge from the secondary claims and from the description of the drawings which are appended to the present document and which illustrate, by way of non-limiting example, the method of the invention and a particular system of the invention for implementing the
25 method.

Figure 1 shows diagrammatically one embodiment of a system allowing the implementation of a mode of realization of the payment method.

Figure 2 shows diagrammatically steps for
30 constructing a table of values making it possible to verify and/or calculate a distinctive sign for a cheque.

Figure 3 shows diagrammatically steps for
35 constructing values making it possible to calculate another type of distinctive sign for a cheque.

Figure 4 shows diagrammatically a variant of the system, in which the device consists of at least two mutually detachable elements.

Figure 5 shows diagrammatically another variant of the system, in which the medium consists of at least two mutually detachable elements.

Figure 6 shows diagrammatically a system of the invention, integrated into a simple circuit for payment via banks.

In the various figures, the same reference notation designates identical or similar elements.

The method of the invention is especially intended to carry out a protocol for payment by electronic cheque in what is referred to, as explained hereinabove, as a so-called "off-line" situation. This payment protocol implements interoperability between (Figure 1) an aforesaid electronic cheque medium 1, which may be a card 2 of the bank card, credit card, debit card kind etc., having an integrated circuit for storage and calculation and an electronic cheque receiving device 3 which can be a terminal 4 with reading and writing for the said integrated circuit card 2.

An objective of the present invention consists in the card 2 and the terminal 4 being devised so as to execute an authentication of the electronic cheque to be transmitted by the card 2, for example from a purchaser, to the terminal 4, for example of a merchant who the purchaser must pay for a purchase, based on at least one random/pseudo-random guesstimation on the part of the terminal 4 and a corresponding response from the card 2.

To do this, the card 2 and the terminal 4 have in memory, as elements known in common by each of them, nothing but irreversible functions and/or algorithms and a MAC algorithm explained hereinbelow. Apart from this, the card 2 has in memory a public key PK_B of a financial institution, such as the bank BA (Figure 6) of the holder of the card 2, and a public key certificate $CERT_B$ signed electronically by an authority for certifying this public key PK_B of the bank BA. For its part, the terminal 4 possesses in memory a public

key PK_{CA} which can be certified by the same certificate authority. In the present invention, there is advantageously no necessity for the card 2 to have the capability of calculating public key algorithms, except
5 for special cases.

The protocol described hereinbelow corresponds to a situation in which:

- a purchaser wishes to pay a merchant for a purchase using an electronic cheque,
- 10 - the purchaser holds for this purpose an integrated circuit card 2 (an electronic cheque medium 1) supplied by his bank BA,
- the merchant holds for this purpose a terminal 4 (electronic cheque receiving device 3) supplied to him
15 by his bank BB, and
- the electronic payment is carried out without there being any link established with one BA or the other BB of the two banks concerned or any other financial institution or monitoring.

20 As the basis for the method, it is supposed that the purchaser or holder of the card 2 trusts his bank BA which loads his card 2.

The sought-after security obtained by the invention consists in:

25 - the bank BA of the purchaser having to be certain that it will only have to pay genuine electronic cheques issued by the card 2 of the purchaser, hence no cheques fraudulently duplicated or altered by the purchaser or a third party nor any
30 cheques fraudulently made by the merchant,

- the merchant wishes to be certain that his bank BB will agree to credit him with the electronic cheque received from the purchaser,

35 - the bank BB of the merchant wishes to be certain that a cheque accepted in payment by the merchant will be accepted without any subsequent problem by the bank BA of the purchaser.

The protocol for payment by electronic cheque, according to the invention, uses the following

cryptographic functions (Figure 2) known to the person skilled in the art:

- a public key signature verification (by an RSA algorithm with small public exponent, RSA being the initials of the inventors Rivest, Shamir and Adleman of this algorithm),
- an MAC algorithm combining a key and data, MAC standing for "Message Authentication Code" (this algorithm being based on what is referred to in cryptography as a "Triple DES" or "Triple Data Encryption Standard", that is to say a system for encrypting data by applying the DES algorithm three times,
- a first parametrized irreversible function, henceforth denoted OWF (One Way Function = irreversible function), combining data and parameters,
- a second parametrized irreversible function, henceforth denoted SOWF, combining data and parameters, and
- an irreversible compression function, henceforth denoted OWHF (One Way Hash Function), also combining parameters and data.

These functions may be implemented by calculation means contained in the integrated circuit of the medium 1 or card 2. At the location of the card 2, the present invention avoids the need to produce a signature by using a public key algorithm.

The medium 1 or card 2 contains, in a memory included in its integrated circuit, at least one non-secret electronic cheque template CF comprising indications relating to this template CF, such as for example:

- ID_{CF} : an identification of the template CF,
- ID_C : an identification of the card 2,
- SP_{CF} : so-called static parameters associated with the template, such as for example a date of expiry of validity and an authorized maximum transaction amount,

- $IM_{CF}[1...h]$: a series of h distinctive signs,
- $SIGN_{CF}$: a digital signature supplied by the bank BA in order to authenticate ID_{CF} , SP_{CF} and $IM_{CF}[1...h]$.

5 The medium 1 or card 2, depending on the particular case, can contain in its memory non-secret information regarding its bank BA which issued the electronic cheque or cheques contained in the card 2, such as:

- 10 - ID_B : an identification of the bank,
- PK_B : the public key of the bank,
- $CERT_B$: a public key certificate signed by the certificate authority which thus authenticates ID_B and PK_B ,
- 15 - as a variant, a date of expiry of the certificate $CERT_B$.

 The expression (electronic) cheque template should be understood here to mean a document (electronic) to be completed with data (dynamic parameters) so that it becomes a unique (electronic) cheque.

20 The card 2 can also contain at least one set of base values $S[1], \dots, S[k]$, associated with one or each distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$, i lying between zero and h , and a secret key SVK associated with the cheque template CF with a view to a verification by the bank BA of the cheque tracked by means of this cheque template. Thus, what is referred to hereinabove as a blank cheque may in fact be regarded as an uncompleted or partially completed cheque template.

30 If the combination of signatures which is used makes it possible to recover data, some of the signed data will preferably be integrated into these signatures themselves, as is known in the art.

35 As shown by Figure 2, a particular distinctive sign IM_{CF} depends on the base values $S[1], \dots, S[k]$, or even on a common or mother base value SD_{CF} dubbed the SEED which, by applying an irreversible function SOWF, gives these various base values $S[1], \dots, S[k]$.

The irreversible functions OWF, SOWF and OWHF applied in the case of Figure 2 have each time at least one parameter whose value is different from one application to another in Table 5. This different
5 parameter can be the parameter of the row or level N (1 to n) and/or that of the column (1 to k) and/or that of the index i of $IM_{CF}[i]$, and/or ID_{CF} and/or ID_B depending on the particular case.

The irreversible functions OWF, SOWF and OWHF
10 used according to Figure 2 are moreover chosen in such a way that, knowing their respective results, it is not possible to find the corresponding input data or, if the input data are known, to find input data different from the aforesaid data and which give the same
15 results.

The said irreversible functions may be chosen as follows:

- the functions OWF may be implemented with a block encryption with a block and key dimension of 64
20 or 80 bits,

- the functions SOWF may be implemented with a block encryption with a block and key dimension of 128 or 160 bits. The results obtained are truncated to 64 or 80 bits respectively,

25 - the function OWHF can be implemented in the form of a compression function (hash function) known in the art (for example the function dubbed SHA-I).

A basic protocol for payment by electronic cheque according to the invention can comprise the
30 steps hereinbelow.

When the purchaser prepares his electronic cheque, he completes a cheque template CF with so-called dynamic parameters CDP for this cheque, namely for example:

35 - the date and time of the payment,
- the amount and the chosen currency (depending among other things on the country in which the cheque transaction is effected), and

- preferably an identification ID_D of the recipient of the cheque (the merchant or the device 3).

The management of these dynamic parameters by the medium 1 and by the device 3 does not form part of
5 the present invention but is known in the art.

The medium 1 or card 2, inserted for example into a card reader of the device 3, sends the latter various parameters from among those cited hereinabove, preferably:

- 10 - ID_B : the identification of the issuing bank BA,
- ID_C : the identification of the medium 1
- PK_B : the public key of this bank BA,
- $CERT_B$: the certificate of these two
- 15 parameters,
- ID_{CF} : the identification of the cheque template CF,
- SP_{CF} : aforesaid static parameters of this electronic cheque template,
- 20 - $IM_{CF}[1...h]$: a series of h aforesaid distinctive signs,
- $SIGN_{CF}$: a digital signature of the bank BA,
- i : the index indicating which distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$ of the series of h signs is used.

25 The device 3 verifies:

- $CERT_B$ by using the certified public key PK_{CA} , and thereafter
- $SIGN_{CF}$ by using the public key PK_B of the bank BA.

30 At this juncture in the verification, however, the device 3 does not have sufficient proof that it is really communicating with a medium 1, on which fraud has not been perpetrated, such as delivered by the issuing bank BA. The information received from the
35 medium 1 by the device 3 at this juncture could be a fraudulent copy.

The method of the invention makes provision for the fact that at this stage the medium 1 should make a commitment in relation to the device 3:

- the medium 1 calculates an authentication code AC_I with a view to a subsequent verification by the issuing bank BA, via an MAC algorithm combining aforesaid dynamic parameters CDP and the secret verification key SVK:

$$AC_I = MAC (SVK, CDP),$$

- the medium 1 calculates therefrom, with the aid of an irreversible function OWF, a commitment value O_AC_I to be used in the payment by cheque protocol:

$$O_AC_I = OWF (AC_I),$$

- the medium 1 calculates an authentication code AC_C, via an MAC algorithm, on the basis of the secret key SK, of the dynamic parameters CDP and of the commitment value O_AC_I:

$$AC_C = MAC (SK, CDP \blacklozenge O_AC_I),$$

◆ : here signifies a chaining of data,

- the medium 1 sends the results O_AC_I and AC_C to the device 3.

At this stage of the protocol, the device 3 still has no means of verifying the authentication codes AC_C. In fact, the device 3 still has no guarantee of being linked up with a medium 1 of certified origin.

As next step, the device 3 makes at least one random/pseudo-random guesstimation (or "challenge") for the purpose of verifying that it is actually the authentic medium 1 which is linked up for the payment of the cheque.

The random/pseudo-random guesstimation consists in giving for each of the k columns of Figure 2 an order or level N between zero and n, that is to say therefore a series of k numbers m smaller than n+1. Preferably, the sum of the k numbers m (generally mutually different) of the guesstimation is equal to $n*k/2$ if $n*k$ is an even product or, if the latter is odd, equal to $(n*k-1)/2$. The way in which this random/pseudo-random guesstimation is carried out does not form part of the invention, it is known to the person skilled in the art. Let it simply be said that

it is carried out in a uniform and unpredictable manner within the set of possible guesstimations of this kind.

At this juncture, the device 3 transmits its random/pseudo-random guesstimation to the medium 1 and the latter responds by communicating to the device 3 the authentication code AC_I calculated and a set of k values which are for each column 1 to k of Figure 2 the intermediate value of order or level m indicated in the guesstimation carried out by the device 3.

The device 3 in turn verifies the response of the medium 1 and, for this purpose, it calculates on the basis of the k intermediate values of levels m received, by applying the irreversible functions OWF of Figure 2 an appropriate number of times, the result to be used for calculating the key SK by means of the irreversible function OWHF. On the basis of this key the device 3 then calculates the distinctive sign $IM_{CF} = OWF(SK)$ and verifies whether or not it corresponds to the value $IM_{CF}[i]$ used to verify the electronic cheque received. Thereafter, the device 3 verifies the authentication code AC_C by using the key SK and verifies the financial commitment value O_AC_I of the medium 1 by applying the suitable irreversible function:

$O_AC_I = OWF(AC_I).$

If all the verifications and comparisons are positive, the device 3 accepts the payment by the electronic cheque and stores the "audit trail" thereof in a protected area of its memory. This audit trail comprises:

- ID_B : the identification of the issuing bank BA
- ID_{CF} : the identification of the cheque template,
- optionally ID_C : the identification of the medium 1 or card 2,
- AC_I : the CDP authentication code.

After the protocol for payment by electronic cheque, the value $IM_{CF}[i]$ is regarded as used.

In the method of the invention, the number of payments which may be made with one and the same cheque template is h.

It is apparent that the secret key SK used to
5 authenticate the dynamic parameters CDP is communicated only at the moment at which the exchanging of the guesstimation of the device 3 and of the response of the medium 1 takes place. From this moment onwards, the secret key must be regarded as having become public
10 information.

The number of possible guesstimations which may be undertaken by the device 3 depends on the exact values of k and n and can readily be calculated. It is for example possible to choose n and k in such a way
15 that this number of guesstimations is of the order of $4 \cdot 10^{10}$, etc.

It will be understood that the response to a single guesstimation does not make it possible to deduce therefrom a response to any other guesstimation
20 since there will be at least one column (Figure 2) for which an intermediate value of a lower level is required.

A loading or reloading of the medium 1 with cheque template and amount or monetary value must be
25 executed in a secure manner and is therefore carried out in a direct line ("on-line") with the financial institution or issuing bank BA or with any other authorized third party.

Since an electronic cheque template CF may only
30 be used a determined number of times so that only a unique cheque which can be authenticated is made each time, each electronic cheque template is produced by the issuing financial institution BA and must be loaded in advance into the medium 1.

35 The data to be transmitted to the medium 1 when loading a cheque template are for example:

- ID_{CF} : the identification of the electronic cheque template,

- SP_{CF} : the static parameters of this template,

- $IM_{CF}[1...h]$: a series of h distinctive signs for cheques,

5 - $SIGN_{CF}$: a digital signature of the issuing bank BA regarding the data hereinabove ID_{CF} , SP_{CF} , $IM_{CF}[1...h]$ which may be included within this signature,

 - in a variant stated hereinabove, a mother value or common base value SD_{CF} which can be used by the
10 medium to calculate the abovementioned base values $S[1...k]$ and thereafter the intermediate values of Figure 2, up to each distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$.

 The mother or common base value SD_{CF} is transmitted by the issuing institution BA to the medium
15 1 in an encrypted manner. To establish a secure communication between this institution BA and the medium 1, it is possible to use a straightforward MAC algorithm and encryption using keys deduced on the part of the medium 1 and main keys in the main computer of
20 the institution BA. The person skilled in the art knows this.

 The distinctive signs $IM_{CF}[1...h]$ of the electronic cheque depend on the mother or common base value SD_{CF} and must consequently be calculated by the
25 financial institution BA. This can be done in advance. At the moment of loading a medium 1, the signs $IM_{CF}[1...h]$ can be fetched from a data bank of the main computer.

 It is absolutely essential to ensure that none
30 of the distinctive signs $IM_{CF}[1...h]$ is used more than once and that the corresponding mother values SD_{CF} are stored in encrypted form.

 The deducing, from the mother value SD_{CF} or from the base values $S[1...k]$, of the intermediate values of
35 zero level in Figure 2 does not come into the actual protocol for payment by electronic cheque. Hence, the choice of the irreversible function SOWF can be left to the issuing bank BA.

When the device 3 or terminal 4 (Figure 6) is placed in communication with its own financial institution BB, it transmits to the latter the "audit trails" of the electronic cheque received, preferably comprising the identification ID_D of the device 3. The financial institution BB sorts these audit trails and for example effects a clearance of the electronic cheque with the financial institution BA of the medium 1. For this purpose, the financial institution BB transmits the said audit trail to the financial institution BA for verification of the payment transaction by electronic cheque, described hereinabove, and receives an acknowledgement of receipt therefrom.

As a variant, the medium 1 can be devised so as to allow so-called incremental payments (or tick payments) in which case the medium 1 also contains in memory an additional amount or the abovementioned amount envisaged for cheques, whilst a suitable device 3 withdraws small successive sums as in the case of a public telephone to be paid for with a suitable card. The expression small sum is herein understood to mean a much smaller amount than that envisaged for an electronic cheque. For this purpose, the above protocol is tailored by appending to the abovementioned dynamic parameters CDP the following parameters:

- the sum or sums corresponding to withdrawals, and
- a base chaining value Z_0 , to be used for the "withdrawal" part of the tailored protocol.

A chain of chaining values Z_j is determined by an irreversible function applied to the following value Z_{j+1} :

$$Z_j = \text{OWF} (Z_{j+1}).$$

Upon a withdrawal, the medium 1 supplies values Z_1 , Z_2 , Z_3 corresponding to each small sum. The appropriate device 3 then preserves an audit trail of the last value Z_j and of its index j which were received on the occasion of this payment.

A maximum number of withdrawals of small sums must be fixed in advance. For this purpose, provision may be made for an algorithm requiring little memory and calculational hardware.

5 The transaction protocol hereinabove may also be tailored so as to execute a payment by electronic cheque in the inverse direction, hence from the device 3 or terminal 4 to the medium 1 or card 2. For this purpose, the device 3 must contain an electronic cheque
10 issued by its financial institution BB and a type of security means containing secret elements of this cheque. The medium 1 can be programmed for its part so as not to accept payments by cheque other than from a device 3 to which it has itself previously paid by
15 cheque when, for example transacting a purchase of an object. Thus, a cancellation or a reimbursement of a purchase may be settled. A payment in the reverse direction does not in principle require authentication of the device 3, among other things upon reimbursement
20 of a purchase, the purchaser being assumed to know and trust the merchant.

Generally, so as not to complicate the medium 1, the latter will only retain the audit trail of this reverse-direction payment as is, with a view to a
25 presentation of this cheque to the financial institution BA issuing the medium 1, during a subsequent reloading of the latter. This financial institution BA can however decide to add, directly after payment or solely at a time when it is
30 communicating with the medium 1, the value of this reimbursement cheque to the amount recorded in the medium 1.

The protocol or method described hitherto does not provide for inverse authentication of the device 3
35 in relation to the medium 1 and/or the financial institution BA of the latter.

Such reverse authentication can however be implemented using the same guesstimation and response pair, providing for this purpose just one distinctive

sign IM_{CF} . This can prove useful for example in the case of payments via a communication network such as INTERNET.

In the protocol presented hitherto, the number of payments which may be made with a single blank cheque template is h (number of distinctive signs $IM_{CF}[i]$ given by the institution BA and to be appended to a cheque template so as to form a unique particular cheque).

According to a variant of the invention, this number of payments with a single cheque template can be increased by using for example the combination of Figure 3. In this combination, each of the various values $IM_{CF}[i]$ is combined, at a first level, by means of irreversible functions OWHF each time with another value which can also be a distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i']$. The results V_1 and V_2 on the hand and V_3 and V_4 on the other hand of each pair of applications of the irreversible function OWHF are combined by another application of the irreversible function OWHF so as to give two new results V_5 and V_6 to be combined by one or other applications of the irreversible function until a unique result $O_{IM_{CF}}$ is obtained which is now used as deduced distinctive sign in respect of the signature of cheques.

So as to make it possible, in the case of Figure 3, for the device 3 to verify that the deduced distinctive sign $O_{IM_{CF}}$ is actually obtained from the authenticated distinctive signs $IM_{CF}[i]$, the method can comprise a transmission from the medium 1 each time of the second distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$ used in a first combination OWHF at the first level and, at each subsequent level, of the intermediate result V_2 , V_6 of the irreversible functions OWHF, which is used so as to be combined successively with the corresponding intermediate result V_1 , V_5 obtained on the basis of the second distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$, until the deduced distinctive sign $O_{IM_{CF}}$ is obtained.

For the implementation of the method of the invention, there is provided a system composed at least of the medium 1 comprising for example at least one integrated circuit known in the art, chosen so as to
5 have data storage means, calculation means, so as to compile in full or in part the Table 5 of Figure 2, and means of direct dialogue, "off-line" with respect to a main computer of a financial institution or one for managing payments by electronic means, with at least
10 one device 3 whose manner of operation is also described hereinabove.

With a view to the operation thereof, the device 3 comprises means of direct dialogue so as to talk to the medium 1, means of random or pseudo-random
15 guesstimation, means of calculation of the elements cited hereinabove, means of comparison and of verification of miscellaneous data, according to the description hereinabove, and means of storage of at least the electronic cheque issued by the medium 1, if
20 the comparisons and verifications envisaged determine the authenticity of the said cheque.

In a first embodiment of the system (Figure 1), the medium can be an integrated circuit card 2 such as explained hereinabove and the device 3 can be a
25 terminal 4 which is able to read from and to write to the card 2 and which can be connected, for example by telephonic network, to the main computer of the corresponding bank BB, at certain chosen moments, with a view to transferring thereto the cheques and related
30 data so as to credit the authenticated amounts to a bank account of the recipient of the cheques, the holder of the device 3.

In another embodiment (Figure 4) of the system of the invention, the medium 1 is also an integrated
35 circuit card 2 but the device 3 comprises a read and write terminal 4 for the card 2 and is furnished with means for transferring data received to detachable storage means of the actual terminal 4. The latter means may be an integrated circuit card 6 of the same

type as the card 2 and may be used so as for example to transport the cheques and data to the bank BB.

It goes without saying that by the phraseology "at least" one element or one method step, the person
5 skilled in the art understands, after reading the explanation of this element or step, the way or ways and possibilities for applying the repetition thereof.

It should be understood that the invention is in no way limited to the embodiments described and that
10 many modifications may be made to the latter without departing from the scope of the claims.

Thus, in yet another embodiment of the system of the invention, if the device 3 is remote from the issuer of the payment and/or in the case of steps of
15 abovementioned reverse authentication of the device 3 by the medium 1, the latter can comprise, on the one hand, an abovementioned integrated circuit card 2 and, on the other hand, a communication element 7 for dialogue between this card 2 and the device 3. This can
20 be the case in respect of "off-line" payments within the framework of telecommunication networks of the INTERNET type when a third party must be able to make a remote payment so as to obtain, or to have access to, services or information without it being necessary for
25 him to refer directly to a financial institution or to an institution for managing payments of this kind.

Figure 6 shows by way of example a diagram of communication between the various means and financial institutions in a basic type of configuration of the
30 system of the invention. A card 2 is loaded with (templates of) electronic cheques and data in a terminal 8 of the corresponding issuing bank BA. Thereafter, this card 2 is presented by its holder to a merchant equipped with a device 3 for the payment
35 transactions. When he wishes, the merchant links his device 3 up to his bank BB so as to transfer thereto accumulated electronic cheques in particular. The bank BB submits for payment, to the bank BA, electronic

cheques emanating therefrom (clearing of accounts, transfer of money).

The said banks BA and BB can be one and the same institution.

5 An institution 9 for managing electronic payments can form part of the assembly for managing, arbitrating and servicing the relevant hardware. A certificate authority 10, such as a national bank, must intervene in accordance with the law in order to ensure
10 that there is no illegal creation of monetary values.

It is apparent that in the invention, according for example to the choice of the number h of distinctive signs $IM_{CF}[1...h]$, a cheque template CF can give rise to only one electronic cheque or to several
15 of them, each being different by virtue of the distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[1...h]$ definitively associated therewith.

For example also, the common base value SD_{CF} can be different at each loading of the medium 1 and/or for
20 each cheque template CF.

A medium 1 can receive, during loading, several cheque templates CF and a common value SD_{CF} for each.

In Table 5, the so-called base values $S[1], \dots, S[k]$ are represented as obtained directly after
25 the irreversible function SOWF applied to the common value SD_{CF} .

It goes without saying that in respect of any step of the method described hereinabove, the person skilled in the art can choose and combine the necessary
30 means for implementing the method with the aid of the system of the invention, the said means being known to him.

Codes and denominations used

	AC_C	Authentication code for the device 3
	AC_I	Authentication code for the bank BA
	BA	Bank issuing medium 1, financial
5		institution issuing 1
	BB	Bank of the device 3
	CA	Certificate authority (see 10)
	CDP	Cheque dynamic parameters
	CERT _B	Public key certificate signed by the
10		authority
	CF	Cheque template
	DES	Data encryption standard
	h	Number of distinctive signs IM _{CF} [i] given
		by the institution BA
15	i	Index of the distinctive sign IM _{CF} [1...h]
		used
	ID _B	Identification of the bank BA
	ID _C	Identification of medium 1/card 2
	ID _D	Identification of the device
20	ID _{CF}	Identification of cheque template
	IM _{CF}	Distinctive sign of a cheque
	IM _{CF} [1...h]	Series of h distinctive signs of cheques
	IM _{CF} [i]	Distinctive sign of index i for a cheque
	j	Index of the chaining values Z
25	k	Number of columns in the Table 5
	m	Order of intermediate values
	MAC	Message authentication code
	n	Number of levels in the Table 5
	N	Level or order of a value in a column of
30		the Table 5
	O_AC_I	Commitment value
	O_IM _{CF}	Deduced distinctive sign
	OWF	(One Way Function), irreversible function
	OWHF	(One Way Hash Function), irreversible
35		compression function
	PK _B	Public key of BA
	PK _{CA}	Public key of the certificate authority CA

	RSA	(Rivest, Shamir and Adleman), algorithm from RSA Data Security Inc., Redwood City, California, USA
5	$S[1], \dots, S[k]$	Base values associated with a distinctive sign $IM_{CF}[i]$
	SD_{CF}	Common base value
	$SIGN_{CF}$	Digital signature calculated by BA
	SK	Calculated secret key
10	SOWF	(Seed One Way Function), irreversible function for calculating base values
	SP_{CF}	Static parameters of cheque templates
	SVK	Secret verification key of the bank BA
	Triple DES	(Triple Data Encryption Standard), data encryption system applying the DES
15		algorithm three times
	Z	Chaining values

Legend for the figures

20	1	Medium
	2	Payment card
	3	Device
	4	Payment terminal
	5	Table of Figure 2
25	6	Integrated circuit card of the device 3
	7	Communication element of the medium 1
	8	Terminal of the bank BA
	9	Institution for managing electronic payment
	10	Certificate authority (CA)